

Falling SSPX

October 26, 2013

For the glory of God and for the salvation of souls it is essential to diagnose why in today's circumstances an end is now threatening the 40 glorious years of the defence of the Faith by the Society of St Pius X. An article and a letter recently written may help in this respect: an article analyzing the Society's fall, and a letter with a note of hope as to how it may rise again.

The article appeared in French on the Internet (see "Un Évêque se lève"). After reading a book on utopianism in modern education which compares it to the same unrealistic dreaming in modern politics, the article's author found that the same pattern in six stages could be applied to the SSPX. Firstly, the pattern: 1 A refusal of human nature as a given to be worked with, and not against. 2 A dream of fabricating the child/man completely anew. 3 The exclusion of natural structures of family/society. 4 The total re-fashioning of the child to generate a perfect new society. 5 The disastrous results, despite all the initial good intentions – 6 Ignorant and perverse children, and a society apostatising and making war on God.

Secondly, the application to the SSPX: 1 Refusal of the reality of the unprecedented crisis in the Church. 2 Dream of fabricating a reconciliation between the Conciliar Church and Tradition. 3 Exclusion of natural interaction between leaders and led. 4 Total re-fashioning of Catholic authority to impose the dream. 5 Disastrous resulting Stalinization of the SSPX, despite all pious intentions – in education, politics or the SSPX, when the dreamer confronts unyielding reality, he is liable to use all the force he has at his disposal to crush the reality – his dream is so much more lovely. 6 Loss of fighting spirit, liable to lead to entire loss of Faith.

The letter, reaching me by e-mail, follows the same general line of analysis, but adds a note of hope. Pope Francis and Bishop Fellay being who they are (both utopians, one might add), the letter-writer thinks that a Rome-SSPX agreement is bound to come, and resistance to it will be crushed. If the SSPX thus falls, he thinks it will have been by its under-estimating of the laity and by its under-employing of them to help establish in society the Social Reign of Christ the King. The SSPX need only pick up again with the laity to work for that Reign, and – here is the hopeful note – it will rally and strengthen all kinds of Catholics who have kept the Faith despite all they have suffered in recent years, coming from the Novus Ordo, from Ecclesia Dei, from Franciscans of the Immaculate, or wherever. Thus, concludes the letter-writer, “the SSPX by the action of those remaining faithful to it will not sink into chaos, quite the opposite.”

For myself, while I agree that clericalism (undervaluing the laity) has been one aspect of the problem of the SSPX, I do not think that it has been the root of the problem. I think that the root has rather been today’s universal turning to man instead of God (cf. Jer. XVII, 5,7), a falling away by no means confined to the SSPX, with the consequent loss of objective truth and falsehood, objective right and wrong. However, I do agree with the letter-writer’s vision of a new alliance being forged at some time in the future, of true Catholics from all corners of the Newchurch and the Church, to carry forward the Catholic Faith (cf. Mt. XIX, 30). May the SSPX shake off its present problems to play a leading part, or, better, a humble part, in that alliance.

Kyrie eleison.